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Towards a Normative Change Framework in Child Labour

Legitimacy, Social Norm, Procedural Norm

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► Research to Action (RTA) Report

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Towards a Normative Change Framework in Child Labour: Legitimacy, Social Norm, Procedural Norm

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Abstract

Growing evidence in the field of child labour has identified social norms among the key antecedents. Social norms regulate the actions of people within the social order. Where social norms are institutionalized people conform to them out of a sense of duty. It is evidenced that deep-rooted and institutionalized social norms are difficult to change. Yet, there has been some significant improvements in research that aims at changing social norms about tobacco use and vaccine usage. In this study, we explored a pathway to change social norms that underpin child labour practices in four major hubs of cocoa and sea fishing. We employed a bottom-up qualitative approach, practice research, to co-design the study and implemented it through a narrative vignette interviews. Using a vignette stimulus, we interviewed parents (n=40), with 20 of them perceived to have engaged their children in child labour, and stakeholders in the communities (n=10). Findings from the narrative interviews revealed norms on informal apprenticeship, inheriting family business, and hard work, and the psychological mechanism that sanction these norms. We unraveled the constitutive procedural norms that legitimize and justify the social norms in the communities. Based on this, a normative change framework has been designed and supported with suggested intervention programs to change the social norms.

Introduction

Over 48 million of the 246 million estimated children (aged 5 to 17 years) that are involved in child labour are found in sub-Saharan Africa (ILO, 2018). More than 70% of the child labour cases in sub-Saharan Africa occur within the Agricultural sector (ILO, 2018). Research evidence from several countries identify social and cultural norms among the key causes of child labour (*cf.* Bandara et al., 2015; Dammert et al., 2018; de Buhr & Gordon, 2018; Zelizer, 2005). Social norms regulate actions of people within the social order (Gould, 2018). It characterizes the shared expectations among people. Where social norms are institutionalized people conform to them out of a sense of duty (Weber, 1925/1986: 31). Social norms regulate behaviors psychologically (Gould, 1993). Known and deliberate deviations from normative expectations attract sanctions both overtly and internally (Durkheim, 1982; Gould, 2018). Some researchers have found evidence showing that conformity to social norms that support child labour mediate economic forces (Kabeer, 1994; Myers, 1999; Nieuwenhuys, 1996). Thus, in situations of poverty or no poverty the tendencies for parents to engage their children in child labour stem from the social norms they commit to. Researchers have acknowledged the difficulties and challenges involved in changing social norms (Andrighetto & Vriens, 2022; Paluck, 2009; Zhang et al., 2010). For some, it is an unimaginable task, because

deep rooted social norms are almost difficult to change. Nonetheless, there has been some significant improvement in research that aims at changing social norms about tobacco use (Zhang et al., 2010) and vaccine usage (Andrighetto & Vriens, 2022). This study seeks to contribute to the research agenda on social norm change by presenting an analytic framework supported by empirical data on how to change social norms in child labour. The analytic framework will stem from the classic distinction between procedural norms and outcome of legitimate constituted social norms. It shows how justification and legitimacy constitute a conduit and a useful theoretical framework to change social norms that support child labour in the fishing and cocoa sector in Ghana.

Social Norms and Child Labour

Research evidence, including our recent systematic review (Abdullah et al., 2022), has shown that normative orientations play significant role in child labour. Parent's decisions to involve children in hard work are motivated by their desire to fulfil these normative expectations. Following a systematic review of literature on social norms in child labour Abdullah et al., (2022) catalogued: (1) informal apprenticeship norm, (2) gender norms, (3) norms regulating the asset value of children, (4) norms on sustenance and succession and (5) the vertical value of obedience, among the key normative orientations that influence child labour in the family contexts. They conclude that activities such as farming and fishing are regarded as family businesses (occupations) which children are supposed to inherit to maintain the legacy of the family. As a result, no matter their interest, children are engaged in these activities at the early stages of their lives to ensure that they develop interest in the family business. These normative orientations are common and stronger in Africa, South-East Asia and some parts of Europe (Turkey).

Research on the influence of social norms and cultural values show that decisions to involve children in child labour are informed by the commitment to the expectations of securing a better future for children (Johansen, 2006). Others are motivated by the desirable objective of making children hard workers (Owusu-Amankwah, 2009), for them to become resilient to challenges they will counter in future (Verner & Blunch, 1999). Collectively, parents in most jurisdictions are motivated by the normative expectation of bringing up

better children who have received proper training, including obtained skills that can benefit their future. Evident in these normative orientations are justifications for why one should engage his/her child in child labour activities. For example, procedural norm of informal apprenticeship legitimizes parents' decisions and actions to involve their children in child labour activities. Analytically, procedural norms vary from constituted social norms. When untangled analytically may be classified as illegitimate procedural justification, though the constituted norm of informal apprenticeship could be legitimate. Put it differently, the norm of *informal apprenticeship training for children* can be justified as a legitimate normative expectation that is expected of parents. Because parents want their children to succeed in future. Success is a cherished social value. However, the procedural activity, herein child labour, cannot be justified both within the social and legal order as a constitutive procedure to achieve the norm of informal training. What this means is that we can still hold the norm/value of informal apprenticeship as a legitimate orientation, instead develop a normatively desirable procedural norm that will uphold the norm of informal apprenticeship, without necessarily involving children in child labour. This study seeks to achieve this goal by untangling the social norms that underpin child labour activities and the procedural norms that are implicit in the norms.

Weiner (1991) argued that interventions to address child labour should focus on social values as they are the key antecedents of child labour. Working on family farms is considered a normative part of training for children (Bakirci, 2002; Owusu-Amankwah, 2009). Their involvement in family farms save families the cost of hiring labour. The economic benefits of involving children in family farms is considered a legitimate justification for involving children in child labour activities. Children's involvement in child labour related activities, including fishing is considered an acceptable pathway of securing better future for children (Johansen, 2006; Lowe, 2017). In some communities, engaging in labour related activities enable children to develop affection for hard work and for the specific occupation they have been exposed to (Verner & Blunch, 1999). Degirmencioglu et al. (2008) report that children in Turkey are involved in child labour to ensure that they contribute to the income of their families and build their capacity. Evidence from the extant literature suggest that parents' decisions and actions to involve children in child labour related activities are motivated by

their commitment to the social norms that legitimizes child labour as a desirable activity.

These social norms are considered legitimate and as such evoke a form of normative obligation for members to commit to them (Weber, 1925/1968: 31). The obligatory capacity of the social norm stem from (1) legitimacy and institutionalization within the social order, and (2) intelligibility of the norm. Gould (2018) argued that when social norms are institutionalized they evoke binding moral obligations among those who commit to the norms. And the capacity to regulate social actions are mediated by cultural norms. Cultural norms underlie whether actions make “sense” or “nonsense” within the social order (Gould, 1976, 2018). Thus, it highlights the intelligibility or non-intelligible nature of social actions within the social order. When social norms are deep rooted, they are regarded as legitimate, and culturally meaningful. As a such, people conform to them out of a sense of binding obligation not only because they are forced to do, but they consider the norms as intelligible within the cultural setting. Parents who consider informal apprenticeship training as a sensible way of raising children will conform to the social norms that support child labour as part of the mechanisms to train children. The intelligibility of social norms makes cultural norms a useful normative framework that mediate social norms (Gould, 2005, 2018). The analytic distinction between social norms and cultural norms enables us to consider how people make sense of the social norms that support child labour.

Social Sanctions and Social Norms

Social norms are enforced by sanctions. According to Durkheim (1982) sanctions are needed to ensure conformity to social norms. Even though, ideally, people ought to conform to social norms out of a sense of duty, some will deviate from the norm. Such deviations need to be punished. Punishment within the Durkheimian sense performs the function of evoking conformity and commitment among deviants. Sanctions also enforces the boundary of the norm and elicit commitment to the norm even among those who have not violated the norm (*cf.* Durkheim, 1982; Gould, 2005, 2018). Failure to sanction those who violate legitimate social norms will set lose the boundary of the norm, which enable those who are committed to, to also break the norm without hesitance (Durkheim, 1982).

Sanctions take the form of overt physical punishment and internal psychological sanction (Durkheim, 1982; Gould, 2018; Parsons, 1968). The first type of sanctions is internal to the individual in the form of guilt and shame (Durkheim, 1982). Deliberate violation of institutionalized norms will trigger negative internal feelings in the form of guilty feelings and shame. For example, in communities where there are norms that institutionalize child labour activities, failure to involve your children in child labour activities can trigger guilty feelings, for going against the social rules in the community. Also, more overtly, sanctions can be applied in the form of physical situational punishment (Durkheim, 1982; Gould, 2018; Parsons, 1968). The situational sanction is meant to inform the rational calculative agent to align his/her interest with the community by conforming to the sanctioned practices. Evidence shows that parents who fail to involve their children in child labour activities are stigmatized (Bequele & Boyden, 1988). The psychological effect from the stigma should enforce commitment to the social norms that support child labour. Lopez-Calva (2002) found a strong relationship between social stigma and child labour. Stigma against those who fail to engage their wards in child labour is positively associated with child labour practices. Suggesting that situational sanctions, in the form of stigma, evoke commitment among parents to engage their children in child labour activities. Parents respond to the stigma by way of involving their children in child labour due to the fear of being ostracized.

Procedural Norm and Justification

Analytically, discussions of social norms subsume procedural norms. Actions legitimate traditionally if consistent with social norms; actions are procedurally legitimate and justified if it's a positive outcome of a rational calculation (Gould, 1993) or normatively justified as right or wrong (Durkheim, 1982). When discussing social norms and the constitutive moral obligations, procedural rationality including rational and irrational procedures take a back. For system to function effectively, for us to achieve social order, and for actions to be consistent and reproduced it must be *both* legitimate and justified; the constitutive procedural norms must be legitimized and the normative commitments justified.

The importance of this analytic distinction between social norms and the constitutive procedural norm must be laid out clearly. Untangling social norms that are legitimized from the constitutive procedural norms present a pathway

to understand procedural norms that illegitimate mechanisms to justify a morally justifiable social norm and vice versa. Take for example: imagine a community where: (1) the elders indicate that the process for the appointment of leaders for the community will be determined by the ordinary community members, where each *man* will have two votes and each woman will have a vote. It is mostly likely that the women in the community will object this decision on the basis that the procedure is illegitimate. It violates the egalitarian values that have been institutionalized within the community. It is probable, however, that even with the illegitimate constitutive procedure, a legitimate decision or outcome could be reached. Such a decision will be a new specification of the egalitarian values in the community, regardless of the fact that they were reached through an illegitimate procedure that could not be specified within the social order. (2) If the elders decide that appointment of leaders of the community will be decided by votes of the community members, where each one is entitled to one vote regardless of gender, this procedure will be considered legitimate specification of the egalitarian values in the community. It is conceivable, however, that outcome of such legitimate constitutive procedure can be illegitimate, for instance, if there are more men in the community and they voted that men should be leaders for the community. Here, although the procedure is consistent with the community's egalitarian values and collective conscience, thus legitimate, the outcome of the procedure is illegitimate, hence the constituted norm is not legitimate. (3) In situation involving procedural chicanery (made out of political or social deception), for example, if the leaders were appointed without an invitation from any woman to vote, the outcome cannot be justified no matter how it will appear. It can be considered a complete violation of the egalitarian value or norm. These three scenarios are depicted in the normative change model we have proposed in this study (see figure 1).

A key outgrowth from this analysis and the proposed normative change model is to suggest that social norms should not be accepted as a given. We can make significant insight into social norms when they are untangled analytically which will be useful to inform normative change campaigns. Otherwise, we could be glorifying a procedural chicanery that is subsumed under a legitimate constituted social norm. For example, the social norm of inheritance is legitimate because parents' have the legitimate responsibility to pass on their

properties and resources to their children. This is a legitimate constituted norm within the social and legal order. That said, involving children in child labour as a constitutive justifiable procedure to attain the norm of inheritance is illegitimate. "Any decision—constituted rule — that follows the correct procedure—constitutive rule— may be termed justified." (Gould, 1993 p. 212).

The overriding goal of this study is to untangle the constituted social norms that support child labour from the constitutive procedural norms that are used to justify involvement in child labour activities. Specifically, the study seeks to address the following key questions:

Key Research Questions

- What social norms underpin child labour activities in Ghana?
- What constitutive procedural norms are used to justify the constituted norms in child labour?
- How are situational sanctions relevant in enforcing norms in child labour?

Study Context: Child Labour in Cocoa and Fishing in Ghana

Child labor is present and considered a serious social problem in lower- and middle-income countries, especially Ghana, due to the primary influence of socio-cultural practices, evident in the socialization process of children (Abdul-Mumuni et al., 2019; Adonteng-Kissi, 2018a, 2018b), and secondary structural factors (single parenting, large family size and breakdown of extended family). There is an urgent need for research to understand the socio-cultural aspects of child labor in Ghana, which has hitherto been ubiquitous yet undefined in research on the causes of child labor in Ghana (Adonteng-Kissi, 2019; Berlan, 2013). Children in Ghana are socialized to work and contribute to family income at an early age, and are conscientized to view such activities (such as fishing, mining activities, clearing, spraying and harvesting farm produce) as means to obtain future work skills (ICO 2016; Löwe 2017; Pasanen 2016). Implicit in the socialization process and common notions held by the parents are norms (standards) that sanction child labor and child work as rightful activities.

Cocoa farming and sea fishing are the major occupations Ghanaian children engage in. Research has shown cocoa farming mostly in the southern parts of Ghana, fishing in the coastal areas, mining in the south and coastal, and

domestic servitude in the southern part, as the major occupations and concentrated hubs for child labor in Ghana (Adonteng-Kissi, 2019; Asuming-Brempong et al. 2007; Berlan, 2014). Children in cocoa farming are engaged in hazardous activities such as spraying (Ansong, 2020; Berlan, 2013; de Buhr & Gordon, 2018) and weeding (Busquet et al., 2021) which can be injuries and affect their physical health and wellbeing. Exposure to weedicides and pesticides, lack of protective clothing including rubber boots characterizes hazardous work for children in cocoa

growing areas (Berlan, 2004). Involving children in sea fishing is classified as a form of hazardous labour (Agbényiga, 2013; Koomson et al., 2021) due to the dangers attached to the nature of fishing. There is no window to classify or distinguish between acceptable and non-acceptable work when children are involved in sea fishing. Fishing is by it itself a dangerous occupation, as such arguments about child labour is non-starter when children are engaged in sea fishing.

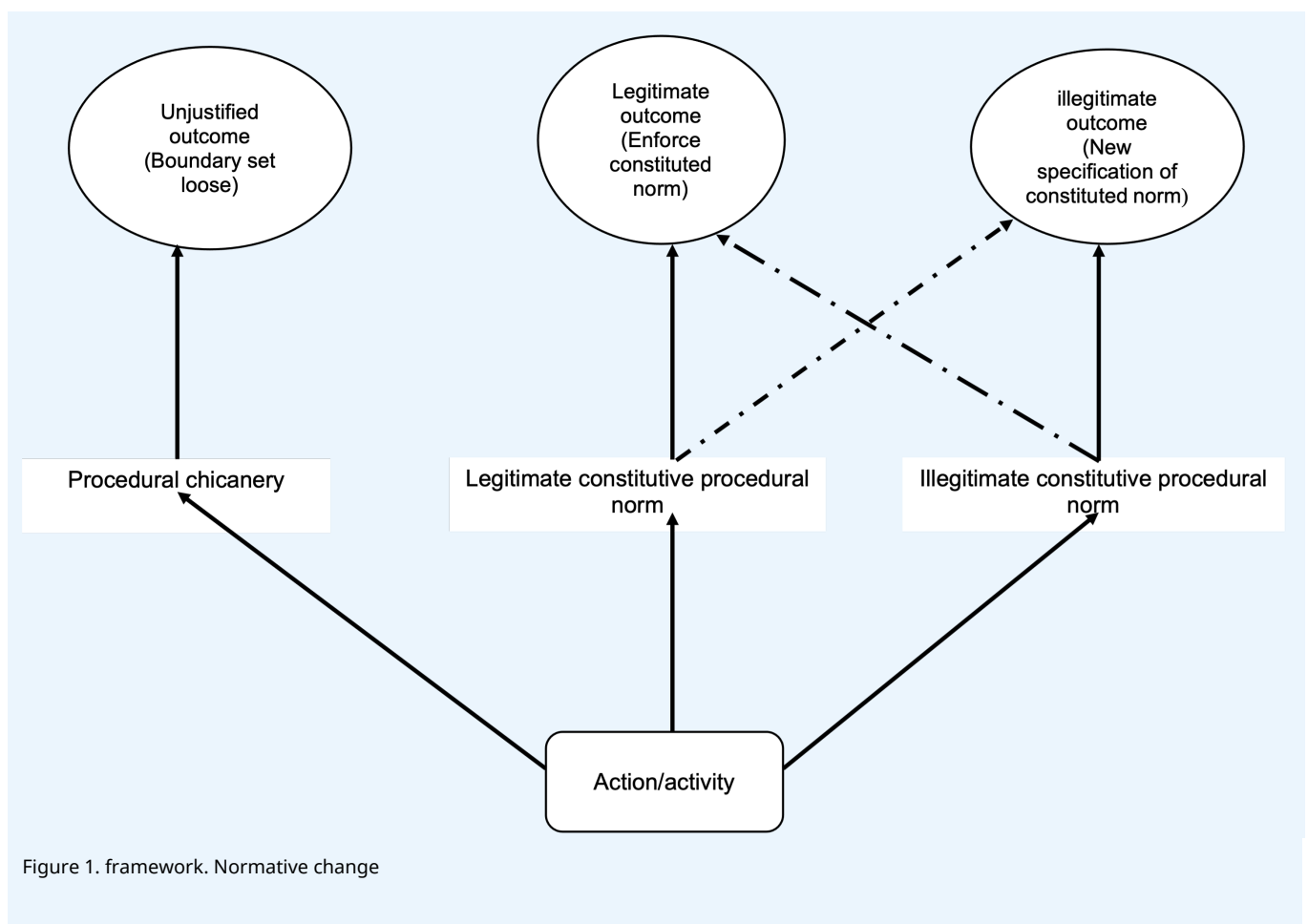


Figure 1. framework. Normative change

Methods

Multi methods: Practice Research and Vignette Narrative

This project was informed by two qualitative research designs: (1) practice research method and (2) vignette narratives. The logic and protocol for conducting practice research study informed the study design and development of interview questions, whilst the actual interviews were guided by vignette narrative approach.

Practice research

This study sought to generate evidence that is driven by the local community members or co-produced with the local people who are involved in child labour or are more likely to involve in child labour. Practice research is an established qualitative approach that enables researchers to collaborate with potential service users in the research process to co-produce knowledge (Uggerhøj, 2011). Regarded as a core bottom-up approach to research and an accepted qualitative method for applied disciplines

practice research allows research participants to be involved in key stages of the research process; formulation, design, developing instruments, analysis and implementation (cf. Julkunen, 2011). The collaborative process involved in practice research ensures that research findings are close to practice and can be easily applied (Gredig & Sommerfeld, 2008; Uggerhøj, 2011), whilst maintaining adequate power balance between researchers and their research participants. Knowledge produced from practice research informed studies represent the views of service users, who are often pivotal among the grassroot communities, such as those involved in child labor. The practice research method was applied in this research through collaboration with the research participants to co-design the interview guide.

The researchers made contacts with key stakeholders of the communities to introduce them to the study and to seek their permission as co-developers and implementers. This was in line with the study objective of utilizing a bottom-up approach in the knowledge generation process. The community stakeholders consisted of: (1) two agents who purchases cocoa in the communities, (2) three leaders of the fish monger's association, and (3) two experienced fishermen and (4) one ordinary cocoa farmer. They were engaged to solicit their views on the best means and practices to carry out the research in the communities. Specifically, after they were introduced to the study, the researchers provided them with a note detailing the expectations from their engagement. This included their input on the research process: recruitment, interview questions, time of interview and hazards/ threats to the interview. A key contribution from the engagement was that all the community stakeholders recommended the need to create stimulated stories that depicted common child labour activities in fishing and cocoa as a conduit to begin the discussion/interviews with the research participants. Their recommendation mimicked a vignette interview approach.


Together with the stakeholders an interview protocol was developed, the sample stimulated stories, interview questions, and processes of conducting interviews. A screening question was developed with the stakeholders, which was used to categorize parents into two groups: those who have are more likely to involve their children in child labour, and those who did not involve their children in child labour. The screening question read:

Screener:

1. I believe that children should help their parents in fishing on the sea. A) Yes B) No
2. My child has obtained valuable experience in spraying and harvesting cocoa through his involvement in my cocoa farm? True/False

Parents who responded "Yes" or "True" to either of the question was categorized within the Yes child labour group. Whereas those responded "No" to both questions were categorized in the no child labour group. It is worth noting that the researchers delivered the screening question after they have engaged the participants in an informal conversation to establish rapport with them.

Pilot interviews were conducted with six parents (three each from the cocoa and fishing communities). The audio recordings and thematic codes as well as insight from the interviews were discussed with the eight community stakeholders for their input. Some of the vignette narratives (stimulated stories) were revised based on responses obtained in the pilot study and from findings from the systematic review conducted by the authors on social norms that underpin child labour. The follow-up questions were also deepened to ensure that the researchers obtained information in relation to the objectives of the study. Examples of the final stimulated stories have been provided below:

 Engaging my children in fishing is simply a traditional system of schooling which doesn't violate the rights of my children. It will ensure that they have the necessary training to become hard workers.

For me, I believe it will make more sense to engage children in my farming for them to acquire some skills that will help them in their future lives. Why should I enroll my children in school if they're going to be unemployed after finishing.

The stimulated stories, like the above, sought to depict positive picture about the activity with a goal of opening discussions on social values and social norms that make these assertions right or wrong within the context of the communities. Other stimulated stories painted a negative picture about the phenomenon and was also used to open discussion to elicit narratives on what makes them right or wrong within the context of the social values in the communities. A balanced nature of the process ensured that detailed information was curated.

Vignette narrative protocol

Narrative interviews are useful to explore stories about people's lives or phenomenon they have experienced (Riessman, 2008). They are useful to elicit meanings people attached to phenomenon they have experienced or their lived experiences. Specifically, narrative researchers focus on the kind of stories being narrated, the process in which they are narrated, and the meanings the narrators assign to their stories. Unlike traditional narrative interviews where participants are asked to share stories about an issue or lived event, this study adopted vignettes as case samples to elicit the stories. Vignettes are useful tools for researchers especially when researching into topics that has high risk of social desirability bias, such as child labour. It is extremely unlikely for a parent to self-report themselves as perpetrators of child labour. Our use of vignettes and screeners helped to overcome this bias to a large degree and enabled us to differentiate narrators based on highly perpetrators of child labour and less likely or no perpetrators of child labour. Indeed vignettes are identified as useful tools to neutralize negative feelings

and minimize self-blame among research participants who are perpetrators of deviance (Wilks, 2004). Parents and community members were engaged to share their stories and experiences related to the stimulated vignettes. The vignette interview approach was deepened by the follow-up semi-structured interview questions.

Participants and Procedure

Forty parents and 10 community stakeholders were purposively selected from four communities in four districts in the Western and Western north regions, namely Wassa Amenfi East, Sekondi, Shama, and Sefwi Wiawso district. The communities were identified as the hubs of child labour based on records from the regional directorate of the Department of Social Welfare (DSW). Formal permission to enter the community was sought from the government representatives of each community, Assemblymen, who liaised with the Chiefs and elders of the communities. The assemblymen served as community gatekeepers and facilitated the recruitment of stakeholders and leaders, including chief fishmongers, informal leaders of farmers associations, retired farmers and fishermen. The community stakeholders facilitated the recruitment of parents into the study, after they had completed their interviews.

Parents and stakeholders were expected to have stayed in the community for at least 24 months. This eligibility requirement was to ensure that the participants had reasonable knowledge about the local norms that underpin child labour activities. Parents who identified themselves as indigenes of the respective communities were much preferred. The participants were expected to have at least one child under their care who is between the ages of 5 to 15 years. And they should be identified as full-time farmers or fishermen/women.

Through the gatekeepers, eligible participants were first approached with a note containing the description of the study and the overall objective. A section of the note read:

"If you agree to participate, you will be engaged on a series of questions about farming/fishing and how best it can be help or negatively affect children. We would greatly appreciate your willingness to talk to us about a project will have overall impact on our children, we would also acknowledge your decision should decline to participate in this study"

The note also contained information about their right to participate and to withdraw from the study anytime

without further consequences. Those who agreed to participate were asked to contact the researchers via telephone contact or inform the gatekeepers. Only two parents declined to participate. Suggesting that the community's overall acceptance for the project was high. Interviews were arranged at the convenience of the participants.

Formal ethics for the project was obtained from the University of Hong Kong. Practically, before each interview, the research participants were made to sign an informed consent letter. The letter detailed their right to participate voluntarily, and included measures that will protect their identity and confidentiality of the information they will share with the researchers. As such, pseudonyms have been used in place of the participants name.

Interview Instrument

Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview guide and facilitated by vignettes. Semi-structured interview guide is a standard instrument for qualitative exploratory studies (Silverman, 2013), such as those involving the process of unravelling the social norms that underpin child labour. It enables researchers to explore into depth both experiences and perspective about a phenomenon. The interviews were deepened through the vignette stimulants. When vignette is used properly, it enables research participants to share their lived experiences and honest perspectives about a topic by aligning the vignette stories to their personal experiences. In particular, we used the vignettes as case samples to invite stories from the participants. Research participants shared their personal stories that aligned with the vignettes. Follow-up questions from the semi-structured interview guide were used to elicit deep clarification and meanings. Example of the follow-up questions included: (1) What local rules govern the kind of work children are expected to do in the cocoa farms? (2) Aside written/unwritten rules, can you tell us some general expectations in the community regarding what children are expected to do in the cocoa farms? (3) What sanctions are there to parents who violate the rules on the appropriate work children should do in the local farms?

Interviews were held at the residence of each participants, except for two parents who opted for the interviews to be

held at a location near the community center. Interviews were conducted using Fante and Twi language, the common local languages spoken in the selected districts. Twi is the common local language in Ghana as such all the researchers could speak and comprehend it. Three research assistants, both Bachelor's degree holders, conducted the interviews in Fante, after they were trained by the researchers. Interviews lasted 95 minutes on average, and were audio recorded using a recorder. All interviews were held between December 2021 to March 2022. Each participant was given a gift of 40 cedis (~\$5.00 at the time of the interview) for their voluntary participation.

Analysis Approach

Data from the interviews were analysed following narrative thematic analysis procedure by Fraser (2006). First, all interviews were translated and transcribed ad verbatim by the researchers. The transcripts were shared among the researchers to corroborate the quality of the transcript and to familiarise with the content of the interviews. Actual analysis involved a series of story segmentation process. Each narrative was organized to constitute stories and sub-stories. The stories were segmented based on the content of the information provided, and labelled using phases. Common labels included: "inherit it" "teaching and training" "the legacy of family". The segmented stories were analysed at three domains (personal, interpersonal and cultural) to identify the meanings participants associate with them. At the individual level stories were considered in terms of personal beliefs. At the interpersonal level, we analysed how the interactions with other network members shaped parents' experiences. These interactions may include engagement with sanctioning authorities. Finally, we analysed how cultural values and beliefs shaped the activities and stories of the parents and stakeholders. Analysing at the three domains enabled the researchers to make sense out of the data and to draw contextual implications from the data. Common stories were grouped under a theme and labelled using common key words or terms. The final themes and included stories were keenly discussed among the researchers. The entire analysis, involving coding, segmentation and thematic labelling were conducted in NVivo 12 software.

Characteristics of Participants

► **Table 1. Demographic characteristics parent participants**

Item	Classification	Yes Child Labour Number	No Child Labour Number
Age	> 40 years	3	3
	40-49 years	6	4
	50-59 years	5	10
	60-69 years	4	2
	70 and above	2	1
Gender	Male	15	14
	Female	5	6
Duration Stayed in Community	> 10 years	3	4
	10-29 years	4	6
	30-49 years	5	7
	50-69 years	6	2
	70 years and above	2	1
Occupation	Fishing	10	10
	Cocoa Farming	10	10
Marital Status	Single	1	
	Married	15	16
	Divorce	0	1
	Widow	4	3
Number of Biological Children	1-3	3	7
	4-6	12	6
	7 or more	5	7
Children under the care of Parents	1-3	13	10
	4-6	6	7
	7 or more	1	3
Ages of under the care of Parents	> 10 years	8	8
	10-15 years	8	6
	16-21 years	4	6
Gender of children under the care of Parents	Male	14	12
	Female	6	8
Annual Income Earned	> GHS 5000	5	5
	5000 – 10, 000	9	8
	10,000 – 15,000	4	4
	Above 15,000	2	3

Number of boats Owned	1-4 boats	14	
	5-10 boats	2	3

NB: Yes Child labour category: are those who responded “yes” to either of the stimulus question.

No Child labour category: are those who responded “No” to the stimulus questions.

► **Table 2. Demographic characteristics of stakeholders**

Item	Classification	Number
Age	40-49 years	1
	50-59 years	3
	70 and above	6
Gender	Male	8
	Female	2
Duration Stayed in Community	> 10 years	2
	10-29 years	
	30-49 years	1
	50-69 years	2
	70 years and above	5
Occupation	Fishing	6
	Cocoa	4
Marital Status	Married	7
	Divorce	3
Number of Children	1-3	2
	4-6	3
	7 or more	5
Income Earned	> GHS 5000	9
	Above 15,000	1
Boats Owned	1-5 boats	4
	6-10 boats	2


Findings

Key themes from the narratives of the participants have been discussed below.

Norm on Inheriting Family Business

A considerable number of the participants highlighted the normative expectations for children to inherit family businesses as the rationale for involving their children in farming and fishing activities. According to the parents, fishing and cocoa farming are the main occupations of their families which have been passed on from their


“ancestors”. They owe it a responsibility to preserve these family businesses by way of passing it onto the younger generations. In their view, involving children at their young ages enables them to develop interest in the business which will ensure smooth transition. A fishmonger at Shama narrated this with the research participants:

 Fishing currently has become a family business. Every father wants his son to take over his business when he is old. It is the same with my situation now, I have taught my son and he has been able to look over my business. Even though, I do not work actively on the sea these days, he gives me my share when he gains income from his activities. When I am sick or need any help, he is the one who takes care of me because I taught him a good trade and I have laid a very good foundation for him to inherit the business when I die.

► **Parent 3** / Fishing Community 1 / Yes CL


It appears that parents who teach their children fishing at the early stages also benefit during their old age, from the work of the children, even before they die.

Narratives from a retired fishmonger suggest that it is an obligation for fishermen to train at least one member from their family network who could inherit the business of the family.

 Fishing in this community is like a family inheritance. Every fisherman is expected to train at least one family member to take over the business when he is not around. That is how we were all trained. Back in the days when I started fishing, it was considered one of the best jobs in this community. We used to earn a lot of money.

► **Community Stakeholder 3** / Fishing Community 2


The concept of family business and the normative expectations to pass on family businesses to younger generations have legitimized child labour activities to the extent that both the parents and community members voluntarily recount how they have engaged their younger children in the fishing and farming activities. A parent in one of the cocoa communities had this to say:

 My father started growing cocoa on our family land. I followed him to the farm around age 8, and he taught me the necessary skills to grow cocoa and manage a farm. He told me that if he doesn't teach me how to grow cocoa, the family business will collapse, and I cannot take over from him when he dies. This motivated me to learn the cocoa farming very well. I later took over his work when he died and have remained a farmer ever since. I learnt from it and what he told me. So, I have also taught my children. Now the first two children (aged 15 and 13 years) have their own farms. People in this community use them as examples to insult their children for failing to learn the farm very well. I feel proud as a parent for what they have achieved.

► **Parent 1** / Cocoa Community / Yes CL

The fact that children who have succeeded in the cocoa business at the age of 13 years and 15 years, and are being used as yardstick to influence other children to engage in farming, suggest how child labour related norms, such as inheriting family business, are deep rooted in these communities.

Another parent recounted by explicitly using the word "norm" (translated) to describe her view of the norm of inheritance.

 It is a norm here and not new. We came to meet it, our grandfathers taught us, and we owe it a responsibility to teach younger generations; when you give birth to children, it is expected that some of the children learn your trade so that they can keep the tradition going. Right from past generations, our forefathers have kept on this tradition. We must continue. It has enormous benefits. When children learn it very well, they turn to support the family from the income they will make.

► **Parent 5** / Fishing Community / Yes CL

Evident from the narratives of the parents and community stakeholders is the influence of the sanctioned normative expectation of inheritance of family business. The notion categorization fishing and cocoa as family businesses plays a central role in the attempt to justify the merit of inheritance through child labour activities.

Family Legacy and Symbol of Identity

People in these communities argue that common occupations, cocoa and fishing, are legacies which they have to leave for their children. The normative expectation of inheritance bound parents to have something that is worth living behind for their children. Hence, their asset, which is either the fishing canoe, boat or cocoa farm, is conceived as their legacies and a symbol of identity. To them, generations to come will mention their names as the forefathers who left behind a huge farmland for them to benefit from. Children are mandated to take part in the activities to ensure that they can inherit and properly manage these legacies.

► Every parent's dream is to have their children continue the legacy he left behind. This motivates every parent to teach their children the act of farming. It doesn't mean the parents hate the children. They however love and cherish for their future and that is the reason why they are engaging them in the farm.

► **Parent 13** / Cocoa Community / Yes CL

The parents perceived the act of involving children in cocoa farm as a symbol of love for the children because it provides them a smooth pathway of inheritance and foundation for their future.

Another parent confirmed that he has involved his children and other family members in fishing to ensure that he maintain the family occupation. To him, involving children in the fishing business helps to maintain the family occupation, which is a symbol of identification for their family. The occupations are used to symbolize the family and hence deserve to be preserved and passed on to younger generations..

► I have taken my children to the sea before. My first born went to the sea at a very young age (like 9 years), so did two of his brothers. I also took two of my nephews to the sea too. I taught them very well. I treated them more special than even my children. Because if I don't help them to learn it well, our reputation as good fishermen will be lost and no one will be there to inherit. If you come to this community everyone knows us as the best fishermen who harvest more fishes in the year. We have maintained that for over decades, so we have to make sure it continues. And that our children will also learn and continue with the good name.

► **Parent 16** / Fishing Community / Yes CL

Implicit in the quest to maintain a family legacy and inheritance is the desire to promote family esteem and reputation. Families with good reputation as farmers consider it as a responsibility to maintain the reputation and esteem, hence involve their children in the work to become good fishermen. This notion was corroborated by a parent in the cocoa community:

▶ Within a year our family alone we can harvest more than 500 cocoa bags. Everyone in the community knows this. It has been there before our great grandfathers. That is what the community use to identify us. So, each generation is required to maintain this good name. Our parents did it very well. They taught us as our early ages and we developed the experience and interest. Today, I'm also doing my best to teach my children. Out of four boys, three have managed to learn it well and have set up their own half acre farms. The young one who is around 12 years have his own half acre farm and they are doing very well. I even thought my nephew and today he is more successful than me and my children, but he doesn't talk to me (shares a few tears).

He makes me feel I have wasted all my effort on him for nothing. I thought, the business was for the family so

I had to involve more family members so that they would be able to do something for themselves and maintain our good name. However, here I am today regretting the decision I took. I know my children wouldn't disappoint me. They will do well and look after me when I can't continue anymore

► **Parent 7** / Farming Community / Yes CL

Although the main rationale is to ensure that children inherit and maintain the family legacy, parents who train their children or nephews expect some returns. They feel disappointed when those they have trained fail to support them. However, the disappointment does not stop parents from involving children in the farm. They are motivated by the expectation to maintain the legacy and reputation of the family.

To further justify legitimacy of the norms of inheritance and family legacy, a parent compared fishing to other occupations such as football and Pastoral work. He argued that society accept these occupations as legacies that children should be taught to inherit but detest fishing as a form of legacy. He argued this way:

▶▶ In this world everybody works with a purpose. Mostly the purpose with which people work is to live a legacy for the next generation to continue. Let me use Abdi Pele [renowned and one of the most successful Ghanaian/African footballers] as an example, he played football all his life and today all his children are also into football. He was able to impact onto his children the skills that he learnt and today his legacy still leaves on. It is the same with pastoral work. When someone is a pastor, he tries as much as possible to train one of his children in his ways so that they can takeover his work. Even in the government sector, these things work there. People train their children in their line of profession so that their children can

replace them in their field of practice when they grow old. If all these are acceptable and allowed, why is fishing alone targeted.

What is wrong with a fisherman teaching his son to follow his footsteps? For me, I suggest that the government must reconsider its position on these things and engage the local fishermen on better ways of doing it. It will be better if the government agrees with fishermen that; if they have three sons, they can take one of them to the sea and teach them their skills. Until these things are done, fishing will continue to dwindle, and it will affect the number of fishes on the market.

► **Parent 13** / Fishing Community / Yes CL

The comparison and justification provided by the parent, including the suggestion to have a legitimate legal agreement with the government that will enable parents to enroll at least one of their children in fishing, is indicative of the strength of the norms that underpin child labour in Ghanaian communities.

Some parents showed concern and felt worried that their legacy will be lost because there is no child to take over. Also, parents showed concern about the intensive education programmes by the government which has affected children's involvement in fishing.

There is nothing I can do to sustain my legacy because there is no one to continue it. At first it was not like this, our parents could take us to the sea and teach us fishing so that we continue their work when they die. But today, a lot of things have evolved and it is destroying the face of fishing in this community. If this continue for long, there will be less fishing activities in this country and the government would have to import fishes into the country. This will also cost the country huge sums of money.

► **Parent 18** / Fishing Community / Yes CL

Today, most of us share boundary with people who are not our relatives. In view of this, it is important that you take your child with you to the farm so that they know the boundaries to your farmland. In the olden days, our parents use to do that and it helped us to identify their lands. If this is done, no one can cheat you of your inheritance.

► **Parent 1** / Cocoa Community / No CL

The practice of enabling children to know the boundaries of their parents' farmlands is considered an acceptable and standard pathway to the norm of inheritance and family legacy.

Other parents argued that failure to involve children in the work and introduce them to the margins of the farmlands could result in litigation when they are no more alive:

Maintain family boundaries

Related to the norms of inheriting family business and family legacy is the theme on "maintaining family boundaries of cocoa farms, which was shared by all participants in the cocoa communities. A major rationale and justification for the act of child labour is to ensure that children are aware of the boundary of the cocoa farms. Knowing the boundary of the farm will facilitate smooth takeover and ensure that children are not cheated when their parents die. One parent had this to say, when she was asked about the rationale behind the act:

▶▶ I take them along so that I can show them the boundaries to my farm. This would help them identify my farmlands when I am no more. I also teach them to know how different my farmland is from others. This will help prevent any future land litigation issues. If they actively participate in the farm no one will question them about my farm when I leave, because they know the margins and have been working with me.

▶ **Parent 6** / Cocoa Community / No CL

In extreme cases, parents argue that someone may take the farmland when they die because the children do not know where it is located and the margins.

▶▶ What I will say is that, when children are not taken to the farm, a lot of things get lost or missing. If you have a cocoa farm and your child doesn't know where it is, someone might take it when you die. Nobody can defend the land for you because, they did not know where your farm was. If you do not take your children to the farm or show them your farm, your property gets missing when you are no more.

▶ **Parent 10** / Cocoa Community / Yes CL

Whiles in the legal and social order children are entitled to inherit properties of their parents, the justification given by parents in this study raises questions about the procedural norms that undergird these norms. It is perplexing to conceive that parents will involve their children in the cocoa farm as part of the procedure to ensure smooth inheritance. These justification raises questions about the true intentions of the parents as well as the legitimacy of the procedural norm. Prevalence of the norms related to inheritance has been presented in the coding web tree below:

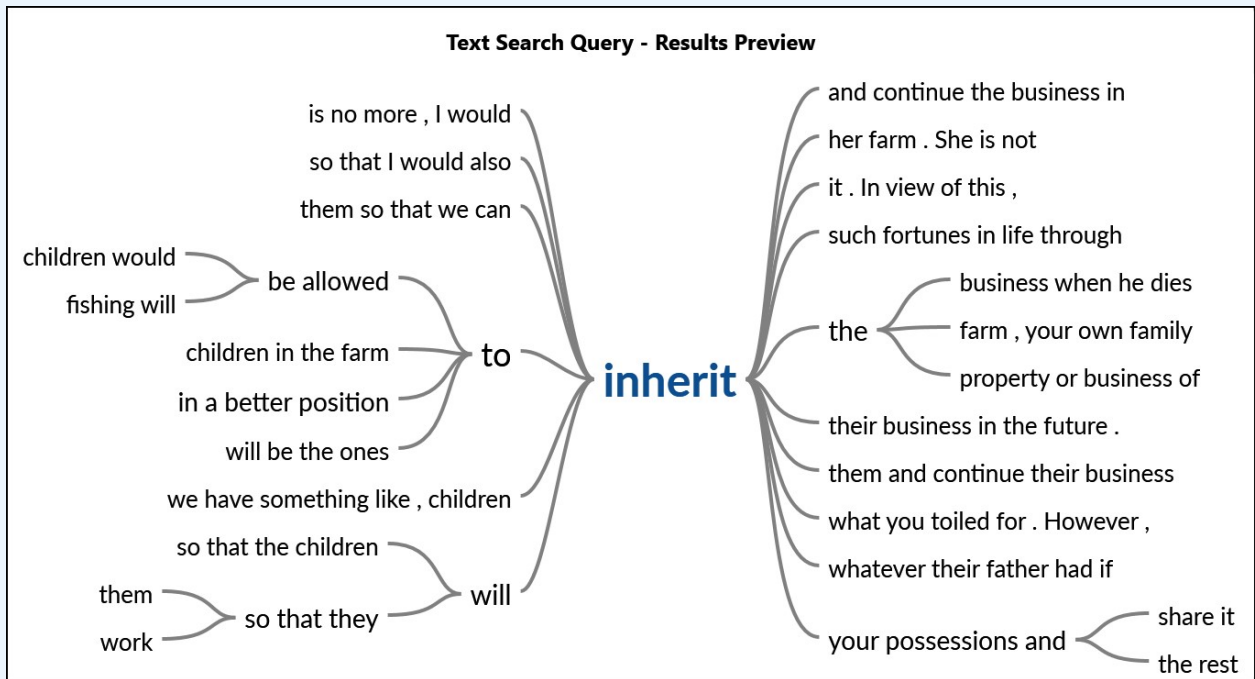


Figure 2. Coding web tree on inheritance

Hard Work Standards

Narratives from the parents shows that involving children in cocoa and fishing helps to achieve the standards of hard work, which is cherished by all members of the community. According to them, it is important for children to be hard workers to facilitate their success in future. Engaging children in cocoa and fishing work enable children to contribute to family income and overcome the habit of laziness. Evidence from two parents showed that sometimes children are forced to work to achieve the normative standards of hard work:

► Parents want their children to become hardworking. However, there are some children who would not work with the numerous training you give them. There are some children who need to be forced before they go to the farm. Children of this character would never take up the work of a farmer. They have portrayed right from the early stages that they are not interested.

► Parent 14 / Cocoa Community / Yes CL

It is known that if you train the child in the right way he would not grow to become a stubborn or lazy child. Therefore, if you always take them to the farm with you, there is no way they can stay behind and steal from someone.

► **Parent 1** / Cocoa Community / Yes CL

Taken children to the farm as a pathway to achieve the norm of hard work is perceived to have additional benefit of preventing them from engaging in social vices, such as stealing.

Additionally, some parents suggest that engaging children in the farm could have financial benefits and may prepare them to supervise the farm in the absence of their parents.

It is very true. I have already said this, if you do not teach the child the right things to do, they will grow to become lazy. However, if you teach them the skills they need in a farm, it will help them become hardworking. If you teach the child, they can go to the farm on days you are not around and make sure the farm is in good shape. In times where there is no money in the house, the child can assist others in their farm and earn money for themselves. So, I think it will be beneficial to teach your child in this sense.

► **Parent 13** / Cocoa Community / No CL

A parent reiterated argument about the norm of hard work by sharing his personal experience.

Let me use myself as an example; I never went to school but because I was engaged in farm work by my father, I have been able to work in it till now. I have been hard working and I have reaped the results of it. My eldest son is about 35 years and I cared for him with this same cocoa farm. I therefore agree that the involvement of children in the farm is to teach them the virtue of hard work. Under no circumstance can this be considered as wrong, farming has a great benefit to ourself and the community at large. With all our toil in the farm, we do so for our children.

► **Parent 3** / Cocoa Community / Yes CL


We all did same when we were kids. Those times we could even sit on a piece of wood and go fishing in the shallow waters. Some engage in this for some time and then they decide to join a fishing crew. They all contribute greatly to the training of a child to become hardworking.

► **Parent 14** / Fishing Community / Yes CL

Norms on Informal Apprenticeship


Training children to acquire the skills of farming and fishing were considered a normative obligation in the selected communities. Parents justified their act by highlighting the norms on informal apprenticeship training. They argued that traditionally children are required to obtain skills from their parents, in addition to the knowledge they will acquire from formal education. These informal skills are meant to provide alternative sources of livelihood for children. A retired fishmonger narrated how she started fishing at age six and the aspirations attached to the practice of involving children in fishing

Commenting on exact practices that make children to become hard workers, a parent in the fishing community highlighted on some examples:

 I have been a fisherman for a very long time. I began when I was a child around 6 years. I followed my father to the sea and engaged in fishing activities. When my father died, I continued his work due to the experience I gained from him. When I was into active fishing, I use to go Accra, Ivory Coast, and some other coastal areas for fishing. It is believed that once you learn all these skills, you might gain the opportunity to work in fishing harbors in Tema and Sekondi. Through those works you can end up in some of the European countries. There is no way a parent would want to violate the rights of their child. It is prudent to teach them fishing so that life will be easy for them in the future.

► **Stakeholder 2** / Fishing Community

It appears the aspirations of working in big harbors and the potential of travelling abroad through fishing has enforced the norms of informal apprenticeship training.

 ...Let me give you one example. There was a guy in this town who was taught by his father for so many years. He learnt how to mend fishing nets and how to repair boats when they get spoilt. He had an opportunity to work with one of the mechanized boats in Sekondi. One day the boat developed some fault on the sea, and they had to stop fishing and return to shore to fix it. However, with his skills, the guy was able to service the boat and as a results the whites took him to Spain. As we speak, he is a resident there and he has come for two of his brothers to join him there. So, when you teach your child fishing, it can help him in diverse ways.

► **Stakeholder 2** / Fishing Community

Another parent from the cocoa community has emphasized the rationale of making children to become great farmers and secure a better future for them through their participation in the cocoa work.

It is important for every parent who is a farmer to engage their children in farm work. This would aid the children to acquire some sort of skill and continue their work in the near future. There is nothing wrong with it... I am only teaching the child key practices in farming so that they would become great farmers in the future.

► **Parent 11** / Cocoa Community / Yes CL

Others argued that childhood is the best time for children to learn, hence engaging them at their childhood period will ensure that they acquire the skills with ease.

Narratives from two parents summarizes this justification.

At that stage of his life, they will be able to pick whatever you teach them. This would make them become more perfect in the skill when they grow up.

► **Parent 16** / Fishing Community / Yes CL

At first, parents did that to ensure that their children will learn from them so that in the near future, the children would have something better doing. They also had the vision that this would help their children cater well for their next generation. The same reason applies for most parents today. Most especially, the children are sent to the farm to learn how to plant certain cash crops.

► **Parent 14** / Cocoa Community / Yes CL

Due to their strong commitment to the norms on informal apprenticeship training, some parents expressed dissatisfaction with governments' education programmes to eradicate child labour.

At first everyone knew that they were brought up by farmers and they thought them the skill. However, these days we do not know what the government want to say. When we started, we use to follow our parents to the farm so that we will learn a skill and teach our children so that they will also teach their children in the near future. These days they say we must not take children to the farm. They even tell the children in school so most of them disobey their parents and do not follow them to the farm. I personally do not agree with the concept that children should not follow their parents to the farm. They only go there to help their parents; it is part of our culture we must understand that.

► **Parent 20** / Cocoa Community / Yes CL

Psychological Rewards and Sanctions

Evidence from the narratives revealed that the norms that motivate child labour practices are enforced by informal

sanctions including rewards. These sanctions are often psychological in the form of insult and praises. Parents who engage their children in child labour activities receive praises from their community members for instilling good social norms in the children. Whereas those who talk against child labour practices and the social norms that underpin them are insulted to ensure that they do not *set loose* the boundary of the norm. Narratives from a parent summarizes how praises are used to enforce the social norms:

When community members see my children accompany me to the farm, they mostly say that I have groomed my children very well. They commend the children that they are very helpful and hardworking.

► **Parent 12** / Cocoa Community / Yes CL

Community members who engage their children in child labour activities received praises for raising their children well and for maintaining the norm of hardwork.

Some other parents commented that these praises are needed to ensure that parents do their best for their children by engaging them in their work:

We need commendations to ensure that we teach the children the right ways. It is not wrong when we engage the children in the work. It is part of the training that children need to become successful.

► **Parent 10** / Fishing Community / Yes CL

The narratives showed that those who talked against the norms that support child labour activities often received insults from the community members on the basis that they are instigating children against the norms of the community. A parent narrated how she has stopped commenting on child labour situations due to the insults.

It is expected that, people around should react to such issues however, the behaviour of some parents deter most people from doing that. They will insult you and call you names if you dare questions why a parent is taking their child to the farm. Even if they themselves do not react to it, other community members will insult you. Some even say that, those who speak against sending children to the farm want to influence their children badly. If it wasn't for the behaviour of some parents, I would have taken it upon myself to advice such parents not to take their children to the farm when it is a school going day.

► **Parent 2** / Cocoa Community / No CL

It is evident that indeed insults as a sanctioning mechanism has succeeded in enforcing the norms on child labour as it has prevented some community members from talking against child labour activities in the community

Discussion and Implications

This study sought to unravel the normative underpinnings of child labour in the cocoa and fishing sector in Ghana and to tease out the procedural justification of the social norms. Specifically, the study aimed at 1) identifying the social norms that underpin child labour in cocoa and fishing, 2) the constitutive procedural norms that are used to justify child labour and 3) the situational sanctions that are used to enforce child labour norms. Findings from the bottom-up practice research and vignette-based narrative interviews adds to the body of research on child labour. It draws attention to the required intervention measures needed to shift and change either the constituted social norms or the constitutive procedural norms.

Evidence from the narratives show that parents in the cocoa and fishing communities (including the community stakeholders) are motivated by the norms of inheriting family business to involve their children in child labour. It is commonly sanctioned in these communities that the cocoa and fishing occupations are family business which are meant to be passed on to younger generations. Families are obliged to teach at least one child of the family to ensure that they can inherit the family occupation. Busquet et al.s' (2021) study within the cocoa chain in west Africa revealed that cocoa is regarded as a family occupation and families are obliged to ensure that the next generation farmers are trained to assume the responsibility. Findings from this study show that there is an informal rule that guide parents to teach at least one child within the family the occupation of the family, cocoa farming. It appears that the benefits of teaching the children goes beyond maintaining the norms on inheriting family business, as it emerged that parents use the training as a security for old age and means to increase of family income. The notion of children contributing to family income, through child labour related activities, has been reported in previous studies in South Africa (Bray, 2003), Tajikistan (Akilova, 2017) and come communities in the Ashanti region-Ghana (Adonteng-Kissi, 2018a, 2019)

The uest to maintain the legacy, and identity and to secure the boundaries of the family farmland were identified as the constitutive procedural norms that are used to justify

the child labour norms on inheriting family business. Narratives from the parents and community stakeholders has shown that cocoa and fishing occupations symbolizes families based on the sizes of their farms and annual harvest. Hence, it is obligatory for generations to maintain such reputation, esteem and legacies of the family by training children in the right way to develop interest and the culture of to succeed the farm. Whilst, this procedural justification appears unique within the literature it confirm the notion that social norms that underpin child labour activities are deep rooted and within the social order of communities (Abdullah et al., 2022). Children who trained by their parents are considered as “fortunate” and “cherished” to be chosen to succeed the family legacy. The norms of inheritance is also justified by the quest to maintain the boundary of the farm. Teaching children to know and maintain the boundary of the farms helps to prevent litigations when their parents die. Indeed, some evidence suggest that parents are sometimes scared that their children could be cheated (Krauss, 2017) and their farms will collapse if their children are not trained to take over (Adonteng-Kissi, 2018b; Busquet et al., 2021). Our study has revealed that these normative expectations are enforced by the constitutive norms of maintaining the boundary of the farms to ensure smooth transition and passage to their children. A large body of research has documented land litigation issues among the core environmental challenges in Ghana (Boateng & Bawole, 2021; Lanz et al., 2018; Obeng-Odoom, 2016). Hence, the justification by the parents has empirical basis, though illegitimate within the legal order.

The study’s findings indicate that parents are motivated by the norms of hard work to engage their children in child labour. Raising children who are hardworkers is a cherished social value and expected activity from parents in the community. The quest to achieve this social norm informed most the decision by parents` to engage their children in cocoa and sea fishing at their early stages. Verna (2000) revealed that engaging children in child labour as a pathway to make them hardworkers is normatively justified in most traditional communities. Others have shown that when children are prepared to become hardworkers, through training in the farm, they are more likely to develop resilient techniques to challenges that may confront them in their adulthood (Adonteng-Kissi, 2021; Bahar, 2014; Busquet et al., 2021). Findings from this study has further showed that the norm of hard work through child labour activities is justified by the constitutive norms of preventing child

involvement in social vices and increasing family income. It is commonly accepted that children may engage in deviant activities, such as stealing, when they are left alone in the house without no one supervising them. Hence, sending them to the farm, to cultivate the habit of hard work is justified, especially as a pathway to achieve sanctioned social norm. Engaging children in work at their early ages is considered as accepted pathway to make them hardworkers according to evidence from Turkish study (Bahar, 2014).

It was also found that norms on informal apprenticeship training motivate child labour practices in the cocoa and fishing industry in Ghana. Having the skills and knowledge in cocoa and fishing, or the primary occupations of parents, is considered a core training children need from the family. Socialization and training of children in the occupations of parents has been reported among the key precursors to child labour in Ghana (Abdullah et al., 2022; Adonteng-Kissi, 2018a; Busquet et al., 2021). Findings from this study confirm that this notion is predominant in the Ghanaian fishing and cocoa sector. The cultural norm of informal apprenticeship training has been supported by the empirical realities, which serves as strong constitutive procedures. For example, a participant in this study report that she was motivated by the fact that some children who engaged in the fishing industry had the opportunity to work in big harbors and travelled abroad. These realities enforced the norms of informal apprenticeship training as it has entrenched the relevance of the norm. Like (Bahar, 2014) in Turkey, and (Busquet et al., 2021) in Côte D’Ivoire, findings from this study has confirmed that the norm of informal apprenticeship training for children is justified by the constitutive rationale that children learn better and faster. Parents in this study affirmed that children “*pick whatever you teach them*”, hence childhood period is the best time to inculcate good morals in children. Rationale for the norm of informal apprenticeship has been supported by narratives from parents, community stakeholders and child victims of child labour (see Adonteng-Kissi, 2018a; Bahar, 2014; Berlan, 2013; Busquet et al., 2021). They learn better and become creative when they are taught at their early stages (Adonteng-Kissi, 2018b). The norm of informal apprenticeship training is also justified by the constitute normative rationale that children need to develop alternative skills aside education as part of their training. These alternative skills are needed to guarantee their success. For parents in this study, these normative justification are solidified by the empirical realities of unemployment in Ghana. They

believe that training the children to obtain an alternative skill in fishing or farming will provide them with alternative sources of income and a guarantee for their success.

Previous studies have documented that for social norms to be sustained it has to be enforced through the process institutionalization and situational sanctions (Gould, 2018; Parsons, 1937). Bequele & Boyden (1988) reports stigma among the situational sanctions that are used to enforce norms that regulate child labour. Parents who fail to engage their children in child labour are stigmatized in their respective communities. Findings from this study show that rewards, in the form of praises, for engaging children in cocoa and fishing is a key sanction mechanism. Parents who engaged their children in cocoa and fishing works received praises from their neighbors and communities members for undertaken legitimate measures to ensure the success of their children. The praises, which strengthen the norms on informal apprenticeship training, is perceived as a legitimate actions that are required to motivate parents to continue. Negative sanctions, in the form of insults, are often meted on people who argue against parents involving their children in fishing and cocoa. The narratives show that these insults often succeed in deterring neighbors from commenting about the activities of child labour. In the "Rules" Durkheim (1982) argues that these situational sanctions, herein insults, are meant to enforce the boundary of the norms (herein child labour norms), even among those who have not violated the norm. It is reasonable to argue that parents have received insults for talking against acts of child labor will be deterred from making similar comments. Similarly, parents who witness these acts of insults on other parents would also be deterred from making comments against the involvement of children in child labour activities. According to parents in this study those who talk against activities of child labour do not want the success of the children; they want them to become lazy and bad children.

Recommendation: Linking the Findings to the Normative Framework

The findings emphasize the influence of social norms in child labour within the cocoa and fishing sector in Ghana. It revealed both the constituted social norms and the constitutive procedural justifications for engaging

children in child labour as a pathway to satisfy the norm. The evidence has several implications, in terms of the measures that are required to address the normative underpinnings. Compared to the normative framework, it can be safely argued that some of the constituted social norms, such as norms on inheritance and hardwork, are justified even within the legal order. Parents are expected to document how their properties would be shared among their children and relatives through legal will. Which is legitimate. However, the act of involving children as well as the procedural justification that perceive fishing and occupation as family business and legacies to be inherited, has no place in the legal order. It contravenes the legal expectations on inheritance. Hence, we propose that a normative change programme should be implemented to target at changing procedural constitutive norms that are negative and develop positive procedural pathways to achieve social norms that are legitimate. If such measures are developed successfully, positively constituted social norms will be maintained but the negative procedural norms, uses child labour as foundation to satisfy the constituted norms would be respecified.

Practically, we recommend that there is the need for an urgent commercializing drive within the child labour hubs. When the cocoa and fishing sector is largely commercialized it will change the orientation of parents. A commercial cocoa farm will require highly skilled people to work in, which children will be an exception. Also, the commercialization drive will necessitate that parents register their fishing business and farms. Which will mean that the norm of maintaining boundaries for smooth transition will be eliminated, since there will be proper documentation on the farm. The commercialization drive will also require that to be successful farmers will require high level of education in agriculture. This demand may influence them to motivate their children to pursue higher education in order to meet the skills requirements to be successful within the farm or fishing. On this basis, we further recommend the need to develop technical and vocational training institutions in these child labour hubs. This will ensure that children receive the needed skilled educational training to function in the commercial businesses. Further, we suggest that a two prong educational intervention should be developed: 1) bottom-up community sensitization, and 2) curriculum education. A bottom-up community sensitization should be carried out using the stakeholders of the fishing and cocoa farming, example, retired farmers/fishmongers and

assemblymen. It appears that the community members are likely to listen to these informal authorities based on their legitimacy and esteem as experienced and respected people in the community. Whilst doing that, a curriculum-based education should be designed to break the intergenerational cycle of the norms. For instance, a course on child labour and social vices, should be included into the educational curricula to ensure that children do not learn the negative social norms and traditional practices that support child labour activities.

Limitations

Some limitations apply to the study. Although the vignette approach facilitated the interviews and helped to open discussions on the norms, it has a downside. It has the tendency of shifting the attention of the participants towards the cases which block their mind from reflecting on other issues that are relevant but not highlighted in the vignettes. This risk may have been minimized in this study through the follow-up in-depth semi structured interviews. Also, though we selected participants from four child labour hubs, statistically it cannot be a complete representation of the child labour hubs in Ghana. Similarly, the sample size of 50 participants is considered adequate for an in-depth qualitative study, but not enough to draw statistical generalization from the study. In-depth analytical generalization is however possible due to the depth of information collected.

Conclusion

The cultural and normative underpinnings of child labour have received traction and increased attention within research, policy and the practice space. This research project sought to understand the social norms that underpin child labour within major child labor hubs (cocoa and fishing sector) in Ghana. Drawing from a normative framework that has been developed, the study revealed both the constituted social norms and the constitutive procedural norms that support child labour practices. Based on the evidence provided by 50 participants (including 40 parents and 10 community stakeholders) the study proposes practical solutions including a normative behavioral campaigns to change or respecify the constitutive norms, as a pathway to curtail the negative child labour norms. The model on normative change framework provides a useful framework that can guide interventions globally to address the normative drivers of child labour practices.

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